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The commenter proposes the addition of a provision that "Materials should be aged/conditioned a minimum of 180 days at 73 +/- 4°F and a relative humidity of 50 +/- 5% in atmospheric air before testing for growth of mold or bacteria."

Project Committee Response:
The Committee rejects this comment for two reasons. First, the proposed change would require the development and validation of new standardized product testing methods. Such a requirement is beyond the authority of the Committee. The Committee believes that the performance testing requirements in the proposed addendum reference the most appropriate existing methodologies for addressing resistance to microbial growth. They have been developed as consensus methods by recognized authorities and provide a standardized reference for our document. Any changes to these test methods would need to go through the same rigorous consensus process before they could be considered for inclusion as a code enforceable requirement.

The Committee also rejects the comment because we do not believe that the proposed aging/conditioning process will significantly affect resistance to microbial growth. It appears that the proposed aging process is primarily aimed at providing "equilibrium" conditions for comparative testing of "physical" characteristics on various products. Such conditioning is not representative of conditions of use for airstream surface materials (as suggested by the commenter) and would not change the materials "susceptibility" to the standardized microbial challenge of the test methods.

Therefore, the Committee does not accept the commenter's proposal to require aging/conditioning prior to testing. However, if the commenter feels strongly that these methodologies do not appropriately address their intended purpose, we encourage him to work with the appropriate authorities to have the current test methods modified to include his suggested modifications.

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